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- ART. VII. — 1. *Quaeritur. The Sanskrit Language, as the Basis of Linguistic Science, and the Labours of the German School in that Field — are they not overvalued?* By T. HEWITT KEY, M. A., F. R. S., Professor of Comparative Grammar in University College, London. 1863. 8vo. pp. 48. [From Transactions of the Philological Society of London.]
2. *L'Aryanisme, et de la trop grande part qu'on a faite à son Influence. Discours de M. JULES OPPERT fait à la Bibliothèque Impériale, le 28 Déc. 1865, pour l'Ouverture de son Cours de Sanscrit.* [pp. 50 – 68 of the number for January, 1866, of the *Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne*. Paris. 8vo.]

THE highly important part which the comparative philology of the Indo-European family of languages and the study of Sanskrit have played in the wonderful development of linguistic science, during the past fifty years, is very generally, we may say almost universally, acknowledged. As a matter of fact, the three are clearly seen to have advanced together, progress in the general science depending on and measured by that in its special branch; and the latter, again, being to no small extent determined in its growth by the success of researches into the structure of the ancient language of India. In like manner, the establishment of the Indo-European family itself, with its seven great branches, — Indian, Persian, Greek, Latin, Letto-Slavic, Germanic, and Celtic, — is commonly regarded as a prime fact in linguistic ethnology, the value of which, both for its own sake and for its bearing upon the relations of language and race throughout the world, is not to be denied nor readily to be over-estimated.

All this, however, has from the beginning found its gain-sayers, and finds them still. There are always conservative spirits who are slow to take in new truths, or truths from new sources. The change of ground and of point of view which philological science has undergone during its later history amounts almost to a revolution, and naturally provokes the opposition of ancient opinion and of the prejudices engendered by it. Moreover, such opposition never fails to find legitimate

matter for its attacks. New views and methods are pretty sure to be pushed at some points further than they can fairly bear, even by those who are, upon the whole, best qualified to assert and wield them ; and yet more, by those who fall in with the current of a novel movement, in full sympathy with its innovating spirit, but lacking something of the sound learning and critical judgment which should make them its real helpers. In general, such a state of things may safely be left to work out its own result ; the truth will appear in the end, and will be the more clearly brought forth if the efforts of its seekers be sharply criticised and questioned during the search. Yet it may be worth while sometimes to stand deliberately on the defensive, exposing the misapprehensions and unfounded assumptions of the critics and questioners. And the two papers whose titles we have given above are especially worthy of such treatment, because of the positions of their writers, as professors of comparative philology and of Sanskrit respectively, and men whose names are favorably known to philologists all over the world ; because they have been made by these men the introductions to their courses of lectures, as containing considerations especially needing to be brought to the attention of students at the present time ; and because they may be taken as types of two classes of objections which have a more or less general currency, and ought, if ill founded, to be removed.

A few words as to the nature of the relation of interdependence between the three branches of philological inquiry to which we have referred will be first in place.

When it is claimed that the science of language is mainly founded upon Indo-European comparative philology, this must not be understood as at all limiting the attention of the science to the languages of that family. The aim of linguistics is to comprehend language, in the largest and most unrestricted sense, — the whole body of human speech, in all its manifestations and all its relations, in all its known varieties, with their history and the reasons of their discordance. The study would be as truly incomplete, its views partial and its results one-sided, if the rudest and most insignificant of the families of speech were suffered to escape its notice, as if it overlooked the higher. Only a small part of the material which the scholar would wish

to command lies, at the best, within his reach, and of this part he cannot afford to neglect anything. If he is to understand the beginnings and the historical development of all the forms of human language, and to trace out the inner conditions and outer circumstances which have made them what they are, he needs to have access to authentic records of every part and period of them all ; while, in point of fact, only the later phases of a few among them, only the very latest of the most, are placed before his view. His conclusions, then, have to be won by inference, from the careful study and comparison of more or less disconnected fragments. And it was evidently necessary to establish somehow a method in which this fragmentary material should be treated, to derive canons and principles of linguistic reasoning and interpretation of evidence, to lay down the general outlines of linguistic history, which should be confirmed or changed by further research.

Now how should this be accomplished, except through means of the special study of the Indo-European family ? Here alone was there an almost illimitable body of related facts, with traceable ties running through and connecting them all together ; here alone was offered an exceeding variety of highly developed structure, along with the possibility of following back the course of its development to a condition of primitive simplicity. There are elsewhere records of human speech of about the same age as the oldest Indo-European, or even perhaps older ; but they are in every case accompanied with conditions which render them vastly less valuable to the linguistic scholar. Egyptian written words have come to us from a remoter time than any other ; but the Egyptian is a language standing almost alone, and of a structure so exceedingly simple that it can scarcely be said to have a history. In this latter respect it is even surpassed by the Chinese, which also belongs to a class so exceptional that it can cast light upon only the scantiest portion of the general development of speech. The Semitic is the sole remaining rival in antiquity to the Indo-European ; and the Semitic, too, is in variety and wealth of linguistic illustration greatly its inferior : the Semitic languages are a little knot, as it were, of sister dialects, sharing together a highly peculiar primitive development, the

explanation of which seems as unattainable, and is certainly as difficult, as anything in the whole range of linguistic problems, and whose effect has been to give them a rigidity and persistence cutting off the possibility of free and varied growth. It was only among the idioms, then, of Indo-European kindred, that any extended reach of linguistic history was exhibited in a connected and apprehensible manner. Here could be followed all the processes of growth, in their manifold workings, from the germs of speech up to the highest type of perfected language anywhere known. Here could be formed a nucleus, around which a whole science should later shape itself. Here could be drawn out those generalizations, here elaborated those modes of research, which might be applied in dealing with families of language presenting yet scantier and more difficult materials. Applied, indeed, not without various modification: it was unavoidable that not a few principles should be set up and regarded as universal upon the authority of this family, which a wider induction would overthrow, or show to be of only limited scope,—that many an observer should have his eye so filled with Indo-European phenomena that he would see them, and them only, in whatever direction he looked; yet practice in Indo-European philology could not but give, upon the whole, a much fuller training and more many-sided knowledge of language than was to be won in any other way.

There is, then, no undue exaltation of the merits of Indo-European languages, no reprehensible partiality for the tongues of our own kindred, involved in the claim that upon their study mainly reposes hitherto the whole science of language. That the labors of linguistic students have been to so great an extent engrossed by them is owing in part to the causes already explained, in part to the historical importance of the races speaking these tongues, and in part to the superiority of the tongues themselves and of the literatures which represent them. Nothing forbids the linguist, any more than the student in any other department, to dwell most upon those parts of his theme which are richest in instruction, and invested with the most interesting associations. Here, again, there is doubtless danger that some inquirers will have their views narrowed by too exclusive attention to one portion of the field, and will be led

to depreciate and neglect other portions ; but such will be proper subjects of individual criticism,—their errors can bring no discredit upon the general method of the science.

Hardly less fruitful for Indo-European philology than the latter for the whole science of language was the study of Sanskrit. There has been a like historical connection and dependence in the one case as in the other. Its ground, too, has been of the same character, consisting in the superior facility afforded by this language for attaining desirable truth. The discovery of Sanskrit made an era in linguistic study ; it afforded the needed organizing force among materials which were already rapidly gathering, but which the collectors did not yet know rightly how to dispose of. This it accomplished simply in virtue of its character as the oldest and the best preserved of all the Indo-European tongues. It occupies among them a position analogous with that of the ancient Mæso-Gothic among the Germanic dialects, only more advanced and prominent. It exhibits the phonetic structure, the elements, radical and formative, with their meanings and modes of combination, once belonging to the whole family, in a notably more unchanged condition than does any one of the other branches. It has, indeed, many peculiarities of its own, which are just as much local, and not Indo-European, as the peculiarities of the other branches are ; its authority is by no means paramount ; there is not one of its sister-dialects whom it does not fall behind in one or another point, or in many ; and yet, when all due allowances have been made, it is still the main support of Indo-European philology ; it guides our researches back into periods of the history of our common language which would else have been beyond our ken ; it has yielded a host of results otherwise unattainable, and imparted a fulness and certainty to the principles of the science which nothing else could have given.

But it is wholly in the nature of things that the uses of such an auxiliary should have been often pushed beyond their true scope by incautious inquirers. The temptation is wellnigh irresistible to set up unduly as an infallible norm a language which casts so much light and explains so many difficulties ; to exaggerate all its merits and overlook its defects ; to defer to its authority in cases where it does not apply ; to accept as of

universal value its features of local and special growth ; to treat it, in short, as if it were the mother of the Indo-European dialects, instead of the eldest sister in the family. The belief that it is actually their mother, the tendency to trace back to India, as ultimate home, the various tongues, beliefs, institutions, and myths of all the Indo-European races, has been somewhat prevalent, not only through the general public, but even among the learned ;—generally, of course, the more prevalent, the less the degree of learning, yet also infecting scholars of high rank, insidiously showing itself here and there in their work, and requiring ever to be strictly guarded against in general and in particular. And, also naturally enough, the exhibition and effects of this disposition have tended to bring about a reaction, and to provoke the distrust and repugnance of other scholars, who were acute enough to perceive that the language was improperly employed, but not sufficiently well-informed to be able to exercise an independent judgment, separating the bad from the good, distinguishing between the merits of the method and the errors of its application.

The first of the two papers we have undertaken to review is a fair representative of this reactionary movement. It is written in no unbecoming tone or style, and has the appearance of being a sincere inquiry on the part of an earnest student, who has been repelled by what he deems errors and absurdities on the part of some among the most prominent authorities in the modern school of comparative philology, and driven into a state of scepticism touching the value of the methods pursued by the school, particularly the use it makes of the Sanskrit language. The author, indeed, writes in such entire good faith, that he gives at the outset what we cannot but regard as the key to his whole state of mind, by acknowledging that he does not know Sanskrit. The confession is more creditable to his candor than to his character as a thorough and comprehensive scholar. For the professed teacher of comparative philology, of the comparative philology of the Indo-European languages, in this age, to omit the Sanskrit from his list of acquisitions preparatory or auxiliary to his work, is, to say the least, not commendable. What should we think of a Germanic scholar who had neglected to master the Mæso-Gothic ? It makes no difference

whether or not the importance of the language in question has been exaggerated by some of those who employ it ; it is at any rate a very ancient Indo-European tongue, standing in such remarkable relations to the rest of the family as absolutely to require to be made a prominent factor in their joint and comparative treatment. What if it be sometimes, or often, abused ? what if its value be only a half or a quarter of what is claimed on its behalf ? So much the more need that one who makes linguistic science the business of his life should put himself in a position to point out the abuses, and disprove the false claims. The world has a right to expect of him that he will give it positive enlightenment upon such matters, not that he will (p. 3) “ enter into a contest for which he is confessedly so ill-equipped,” merely as a mouthpiece to express the suspicions of others who, “ like himself, are wholly wanting in the special qualification, a knowledge of Sanskrit.” We wonder a little that, on finding himself in such company, he was not led, rather than write himself and them out in the way he has, to try what would be the effect of removing in his own case the special disqualification under which they all alike were laboring. We presume that, if he had taken the trouble to follow such a course, either the article which we are considering would never have seen the light, or its scope would have been greatly changed. He might have retained all, or nearly all, the opinions he now holds as to the points to which his exceptions are taken ; yet he would have put them forward, not as reproaches against the general method of modern philology, but as faults of detail, errors of individuals, which needed to be set aside in order that the method might work out its true results. No authority, not even the highest, is infallible ; and in a young and growing science, such as is linguistics at present, the most cautious constructors cannot well avoid building much which will require to be torn down and cleared away, or built over ; but little attention will be likely to be paid to the destructive efforts of those who begin by acknowledging that they have omitted to master some of the fundamental rules of the art.

It is not quite ingenuous of Professor Key that, after declaring (p. 3) that he “ does not purpose to enter into the domain of Sanskrit history and chronology, a task for which he is whol-

ly unfitted," he nevertheless proceeds to discourse upon it for several pages, in order (p. 7) "to show the unsatisfactory condition of the chronology of Sanskrit literature." This has too much the look of an attempt to cast discredit upon one department of the value of the language, in the hope that something of it will also cleave to another and a wholly independent department. The age of the Sanskrit literature has nothing more to do with the value of the language as a document illustrating the history of Indo-European speech, than has the age of the Arabic literature with the position of the Arabic among Semitic dialects. The Sanskrit would still stand at the head of Indo-European tongues, it would be worth to the comparative philologist nearly what it is now worth, though it were of the lowest age that any sceptic has yet ventured to suggest, and though we possessed no literature of it save a grammar and a vocabulary, or a version of some Christian book, as is the case with the Mæso-Gothic. We do not care, then, to enter into an examination of what our author says in this his parenthetical and unintended introduction.

The bulk of the paper besides is made up of detailed criticisms on the etymologies of words and forms given by two prominent authorities in comparative philology, Bopp and Max Müller. Professor Key appears to think that whatever accusations can be made to lie against these two, or either of them, will attach to the whole cause they represent, to the German school of philology and the Sanskrit language. To this, however, we demur, both for the general reasons given above and for other particular ones. The deserts of Professor Bopp toward comparative philology are of the most brilliant, and at the same time of the most substantial, character. It has rarely been the fortune of a single man so to lay the foundation, establish the principal methods, and gain many of the most valuable results, of a branch of study of such wide reach and great importance. But he is nevertheless a man to whose activity there are very distinct and somewhat narrow limits. He is a remarkable instance of one who is a great comparative philologist, without being either a great linguistic scholar or a profound and philosophical linguist. He knows but few languages, as compared with many another scholar of the present

day, nor are we aware that he is deeply and thoroughly versed in any, so as to hold a distinguished place among its students, — in the Sanskrit itself, certainly, he was long ago left behind by the great body of its special votaries. And of a science of language, as distinct from and developed out of comparative philology, in its relations to human nature and human history, he can scarcely be said to have a conception. Hence, although his mode of working is wonderfully genial, his vision of rare acuteness, and his instinct a generally trustworthy guide, he is liable to wander far from the safe track, and has done not a little labor over which a broad and heavy mantle of charity needs to be drawn. The progress of the science has been for some time past in no manner bound up with his investigations, and his opinion upon a difficult and controverted point would carry far less weight of authority than that of many another scholar whose name could not, upon the whole, bear even a distant comparison with his. In a considerable portion of the criticisms which Professor Key makes upon his works, the majority of comparative philologists, we believe, of the German or any other school, would be free to join, yet without abating a jot of the admiration and gratitude which they pay to the founder of their science.

As regards our author's other antagonist, Professor Max Müller, it is only in England that modern philology is looked upon as so identified with his name that a blot on the one must be presumed to sully the other. The learning and acuteness of this author, his power of ingenious and interesting illustration, no one will think of questioning; but for strictness of method, for consistency of views, for logical force and insight, he is much less distinguished; and he is sometimes carried away by a teeming fancy out of the region of sober investigation, or permits himself to be satisfied with hypotheses, and reasons for them, that have only a subjective value. A notable exemplification of his characteristic weaknesses is offered in his theory of phonetic types, instinctively produced as the beginnings of human speech; a theory which forms one of the principal counts of Professor Key's indictment, and which we should not think of defending in a single point from the latter's hostile criticism. Rarely is a great subject more

trivially and insufficiently treated than is that of the origin of language by Müller in the last lecture of his first series.

To go through all the points made by Professor Key, examining their grounds, and refuting or accepting them, would take much more time and space than we can afford, and we must limit ourselves to a few examples. In two respects, especially, his objections are to be regarded as valuable protests, requiring to be well heeded, against modes of etymologizing which are too common among Sanskritists;—namely, the over-ready referral to a Sanskrit root, of doubtful authenticity and wide and ill-defined meaning, of derivatives in the various Indo-European languages; and the over-easy persuasion that the genesis of a suffix is sufficiently explained when it is pronounced “of pronominal origin.”

As regards the former point, we think our author entirely justified in casting ridicule upon the facile derivation of words meaning ‘water,’ ‘earth,’ ‘cow,’ and the like, from alleged Sanskrit roots claimed to signify ‘go.’ This is in no small part an importation into modern philology of the work of the Indian grammarians, the influence of whose artificial construction of roots and derivatives to fit one another, and of their general method of acute empiricism without sound philosophy, has not yet died out, though, as we hope, it is rapidly waning. The body of Sanskrit roots, in its shape as left by them, is a very heterogeneous collection, and not a little dangerous to handle for a person with only a moderate degree of learning in the language: a vast deal of worthless etymologizing has been done and is still doing upon them. A greater service could hardly be rendered to Indo-European philology than by thoroughly sifting the mass, separating the ancient from the modern and secondary, and the genuine from the spurious, and explaining the origin and accounting for the presence of the latter classes. It is the fault of the grammarians referred to, that so many of the roots have the meaning ‘go’ attributed to them, as a kind of indefinite sense enabling them to stand as etymons of almost any given word which may be conveniently referred to them, regard being had to the form alone: of such roots, a part cannot be made to bear the sense by any fair method of interpretation; others contain it in the same way as it is contained in

the Latin *vadere*, *ambulare*, *festinare*, *progredi*, *verti*, and the like. The etymologies which Professor Key cites in justification of his criticisms are of varied character: the smallest portion are sound, and defensible against his attack; others are mere conjectures, more or less wanting in plausibility, and wholly unfit to be put forward with confidence; the rest are palpably false, involving unreal roots or unreal meanings.

As regards, again, the use of pronominal elements in explaining the genesis of grammatical forms, we deem Professor Key's interpellations not less in place. The personal forms of verbs, and other parts of the verbal conjugation, were found to be so simply and beautifully accounted for by such elements, that men were naturally led to lay down the principle, "The verbal or predicative root gives the main idea, the pronominal defines its relations," and then to make an easy matter of tracing the endings of derivation and of declension to pronominal sources. But, as Professor Key points out, there is a vastly greater logical difficulty in the latter case, which is not to be passed over so lightly. Perhaps it may be found removable, but it certainly ought not to be ignored. We know well, from the reliable results of linguistic research, that the transfers of meaning through which elements originally independent are passed on their way to the condition of affixes are often distant and violent, such as we should never have guessed, and might have been inclined to pronounce impossible. We are willing, therefore, to allow it to be altogether probable that pronominal roots have played some part, perhaps a main part, in the production of the elements here in question. But how far, and how, is a matter of exceeding obscurity, which has hardly even begun to be cleared up. In order to its elucidation, we need a much wider and more penetrating investigation than any one has yet undertaken of the declensional and derivative apparatus belonging to languages of a simpler structure, or structureless. And meanwhile no one is to be blamed for feeling a kind of indignant impatience at seeing this and that ending complacently referred to such and such a pronominal root, as if no further explanation of it were necessary to satisfy any reasonable person.

When, however, Professor Key is led to question the exist-

ence of pronominal roots as a separate class altogether, he carries his scepticism farther than we can follow him. To our apprehension, the fact that there were such roots, constituting a distinct body and bearing a different office from verbal roots, preceding in time the development of the grammatical system, and playing a highly important part therein, is too clearly read in the results of linguistic investigation to admit of question. Whether in the absolute beginning they were of another origin than verbal roots, we do not care at present categorically to decide; so recondite and difficult a point may well enough be left for the next generation of scholars to settle. We know of no attempt to identify the two classes, or to derive the one from the other, which is to be deemed in any measure successful. The one our author makes is not less a failure than those of his predecessors. He asserts, namely, that a demonstrative root is but the natural conversion of an imperative verb, meaning 'look! see!' or the like, the utterance of which accompanied a pointing out of the object intended with the finger. And he gives us as an example the English root *ken* or *con*, which he claims to have traced through all the heterogeneous and disconnected tongues of Europe, Asia, and the Pacific Islands, in the sense of 'see' or 'know,' and which he regards as a satisfactory etymon for the demonstrative pronouns of all these languages. We cannot accept any part of this as a good philological process, either the establishment of the verbal root, or the recognition of the demonstrative, or the identification of the two, or the ground upon which this is founded. It all savors of the old helter-skelter method of etymologizing, which it was the main merit of Bopp and his school to have overthrown. If there is any one principle to whose establishment more than another's we have to attribute the reformation wrought by the school, it is this,—that strict regard is to be had to the demonstrated affinities of the languages whose material is compared and identified. The modern linguist keeps before his mind a distinct idea of what is implied in the historical correspondences of two tongues, namely, the receipt of common linguistic material, common words and forms, by common descent from the same original language; that community of descent is to be proved, not by sporadic items of superficial resemblance, which

may well enough be accidental, but by sufficiently pervading correspondence of material or of structure, or of both ; and that one language must not be used to cast light upon the history of another, unless the two have been shown to be — or at least have not been shown not to be — of the same kindred. Professor Key, in the inquiry we are criticising, takes a part of his material, with approbation, from what is probably the very worst work Bopp ever did in his life, his attempt to prove the Malay-Polynesian tongues akin with the Indo-European. But, even here, Bopp really attempted to prove the relationship, by a searching and comprehensive investigation, and would never have thought of paralleling Polynesian roots or words with Indo-European until after such an investigation ; while Professor Key, so far as we can see, is ready to take whatever he can find, there or elsewhere, without scruple of any kind. This method, or lack of method, is a simple reversal of the progress which etymologic science has made during the past fifty years ; it is an error compared with which all that he alleges against Bopp and the German school quite disappears from sight. We are sorry to say that it is shared by more than one other English scholar of note. Philologists who bring in Chinese and New Zealand and Finnish analogues to explain Indo-European words are thoroughly unsound, and need to reform their science from the foundation.

Our author's views in phonetics are not less unsatisfactory to us than his etymological principles. His regarding (p. 20) an inspection and study of the *chordæ vocales*, or (we may perhaps generalize it by saying) an intimate knowledge of the hidden physical apparatus by which articulate sounds are produced, as "the proper basis of the study of oral language," seems about as serious a misapprehension as it were possible to make. As well assert that the study of composition for the piano is founded upon a comprehension of the delicate muscular anatomy of the hand and arm, and of the construction of pianofortes. Precisely what are the acoustic properties of articulate sounds, and precisely how they are generated, is doubtless a matter of great interest to the philologist, and he should receive with gratitude all the light which the physicist and physiologist may cast upon it ; but it is a part of physics and

physiology rather than of philology. Articulate sounds, on the one hand, are only a part of the substance of language ; and, on the other hand, they are not physical products, but voluntary productions, — as much so as gestures with arm and hand are ; they are learned and imitated by repeated experiment upon the capabilities of the organs of utterance, of whose intimate structure and action the experimenter knows nothing. Such knowledge, carried beyond a certain point, does not aid appreciably our understanding even of the phonetic transitions of language ; for habit comes in as a more powerful determining force than the niceties of physical organization. Again, Professor Key overrates not a little the absolute value of Willis's interesting experiments on the artificial production of vowel-sounds ; that the latter was able to imitate them after a fashion by using different lengths of tube, no more proves that “ the character of any vowel depends almost wholly on the distance for the time between the *chordæ vocales* and the margin of the lips, in other words on the length of the vocal pipe, the position of the tongue being of no moment so long as it does not close the passage of air,” (p. 20,) than does the possibility of producing tones of different pitch by pipes of greater or less length prove that the variation of pitch in vocal sounds is brought about in that way. The suggestion (p. 19) that Bopp regards *a, i, u* (sounded as in Italian) as the original vowels because they alone have independent representatives in the Sanskrit alphabet, is wrong in every particular. If our author had understood better the theory of the syllable, and the relation of vowel and consonant, he would never have made an attempt to account for the Sanskrit “ vowels ” *r* and *l* in a manner so lacking in every element of plausibility (p. 21). Whether it is a whim or a false theory that makes him write of “ *asperates* ” (p. 22, *seq.*) instead of *aspirates*, or whether the fault is simply the printer's, we are somewhat puzzled to determine. And, coming from phonetic theory to phonetic fact, we are not a little astonished at finding him (p. 40) on the hunt after a remote etymological reason for the prefixed *e* of the French *étais, établir*, as if it were anything different from that of *étude, épais, esprit*, and the host of other words like them ; and, again, at his paralleling (p. 37), in the face and eyes of

“Grimm’s law,” our *through* and German *durch*, with Greek *θύρα*, German *thür*, our *door*.

We pass unnoticed a number of other points, in which our author lays himself open to criticism not less severe than that which he deals out to the representatives of the German school, and merely add, in answer to his main inquiry, “whether the labors of that school are not overvalued,” that, in fact, the merits of any school that is active and successful in the discovery of new truth can hardly avoid being both overvalued and undervalued, and that this one doubtless constitutes no exception to the general rule : that its labors are overvalued by those who assume that the etymologizings of even its leaders are to be accepted on authority, in all their details, without free and careful criticism ; and undervalued by those who, on account of faults of detail, reject the whole method, as well as by those who, having the acuteness to detect such faults, yet lack the sound learning and enlightened judgment which should lead them to adopt the method wherever it is truly valuable. And we fear that our author is to be ranked in the latter class. The German school has its defects, but, at the same time, its influence is far from being yet so wide-spread and commanding as were to be desired ; and no anti-German school can find any ground to stand upon.

We come now to consider the other article, which, both for its character and contents and on account of the very prominent position in the community of philological scholars held by its author, demands at our hands a still more careful and detailed examination. M. Oppert is especially known all over the world as a student of the Assyrian cuneiform monuments. Among the few who have occupied themselves with this difficult subject, no one has seemed to approach it with more thorough training and fuller preparation than he, or to conduct his investigations by more approved methods ; and, among the learned of the continent of Europe, his views carry a weight superior to those of any other person. Moreover, he holds the position of Professor of Sanskrit in the School of Oriental Languages attached to the great Paris library, and therefore appears to speak *ex cathedra* upon whatever concerns that language and its bearings. Hence, if he advances opinions at

variance with what has usually been taken hitherto for sound philology, it is needful that they be not passed over in silence.

The object of M. Oppert's paper, unlike that of Professor Key's, is in a much higher degree ethnological than philological. He has no complaint to urge against the Boppian school of comparative grammar, as such; he speaks in the most approving, even complimentary, terms of its founder, of whom he is proud to own (p. 54) that he has been "personally the pupil"; he is willing to allow, as a harmless or laudable exercise of acuteness, the comparison of form with form, and of dialect with dialect, so long as the comparer confines himself strictly to such work, and never looks beyond to inquire what all this proves. Nay, he will go so far as to allow that certain petty notions, to which we need not theoretically deny any degree of importance at all, are capable of being derived from the study of language. He has himself, he says (p. 53), furnished an example of what can be done for history in this way, by pointing out that the form of the Greek word *ῥιζα*, 'rice,' demonstrates that rice came to Europe from India, not directly, but by way of Persia. M. Pictet's very lively and suggestive, but very unsafe, work on "Indo-European Origins" is to him, in respect both to wideness of limit and sureness of result, the *ne plus ultra* of what philology can accomplish toward gathering "curious, or rather piquant" items of information as to the knowledge and possessions of the "Aryans, *soi-disant* primitive": but there lies nothing of consequence behind these facts; no historical, no ethnological truths of wider range may be arrived at by inference from them; to conclude that there exists a tie of relationship between the peoples whose tongues are so nearly related is worse than inadmissible, it is palpably absurd. What M. Oppert proposes in explanation of the connection of languages we will presently inquire, after first seeing how he apprehends the scope of linguistic study.

At the very outset of his article, he is guilty of a totally incorrect statement of what is claimed on behalf of this branch of science by its students and advocates. It pretends, he says (p. 50), to "retrace with a sure hand the effaced pages of history, and to supply the place of missing documents, even previous to the remote period of the Pharaohs, whose monuments

seem to defy eternity ” (if any one can tell what that means). Now no one, surely, who is worthy of M. Oppert’s attention for a moment, thinks at the present day of setting up any such unfounded claim. Linguistic science is simply one, though one of the most fruitful, of the means whereby we win hints and fragments of knowledge respecting times and peoples of which we learn nothing from other sources, or whereby we check and supplement the defective information we receive from other sources. No method of historical inquiry stands alone, nor will they all together, it is likely, do more than most imperfectly and unsatisfactorily accomplish the task which it is here asserted that linguistic science proposes to achieve unaided. How fragmentary must be, at the best, our reconstruction of the immeasurable fabric of past human history, is a truth which is coming to be felt more and more every year, and which the profoundest scholars most fully realize. To take the random assertions of superficial dreamers for the present attitude of a whole class of students may be very convenient for him who wishes to depreciate their study, but it is very discreditable either to his ingenuousness or to his understanding of the real aspect of the science. When, then, M. Oppert winds up one of his chapters (p. 57) with this bodeful sentence, “ Let us not forget the fact which many *savants* acknowledge to themselves, but which no one dares confess aloud, that comparative philology, in the narrow form in which it has had to be created in order to prove fruitful, cannot be the science of the future ” ! he simply exposes himself in the somewhat-ridiculous attitude of one who knocks down, with gestures of awe and affright, a tremendous man of straw of his own erecting.

Next, like Professor Key, M. Oppert falls mercilessly upon the unfortunate Sanskrit literature ; not, indeed, in order to prove its modern date, but for the purpose of showing up the exaggerations of which its literary and scientific value has been the subject. In much that he urges, there is a certain kind and degree of justice, but the use he attempts to make of it is unjustifiable. Fifty years and more ago, when this literature was first brought to our knowledge, the attitude of the public mind was very different from what it is now. Men were still

possessed with the notion that somewhere in the East, and somewhere in the past, there was an immense deposit of primeval wisdom, of which at least the scattered fragments might be recovered for our enlightenment. And India was one of the regions to which all eyes were turned with especial expectation and longing. When, therefore, the Sanskrit literature, of such evident antiquity, and containing so much that was engaging and valuable, made its appearance, the disposition to overestimate it was altogether natural ; and some of its enthusiastic admirers extolled it as being grander and nobler than aught the world knew beside. The echoes of those ill-considered praises are still heard, it is true, in the opinions of certain persons, who get their learning and judgment at second hand ; and there may possibly be here and there even an independent scholar, of a very peculiar turn of mind, who rates the Mahâbhârata above the Iliad, and Jaimini and Kanâda above Pythagoras and Plato ; but the generality of students of literature have long since abandoned such errors. Juster views of the legacies from primitive times, and of the endowments and achievements of various races, are prevalent ; we do not look farther back than to Greece for the first full development of true art and science and philosophy, nor expect from other quarters aught but the records of men's imperfect attempts at the realization of those highest ideals of human endeavor. And to this desirable result the study of Indian literature and language has in no small part contributed. It has helped to teach us that the literary productions of different races are to be examined as documents illustrating the history of each race, and so, along with it, that of all humanity, which cannot be understood in its totality, nor in any of its portions, without the concurrence of all. This whole kind of value appears to escape the notice of our author ; if a body of works is not going to teach us how to think and reason better, or to furnish us new and superior models of taste, it is of no account in his eyes. That the hymns of the Veda are inferior as poetical productions to the Psalms of David, and cannot hope ever to displace the latter in our affections and daily use, constitutes in his eyes their condemnation. We, on the other hand, would maintain it as the grand merit of the Vedic poetry, that, like the lan-

guage in which it is written, it opens to us a view of a period in Indo-European history which careful comparison and induction show us to be of remarkable antiquity and primitiveness ; which are therefore calculated to modify — and have, in fact, already powerfully modified — our views of primitive times and conditions in general.

It would not be easy to discover, without aid, the connection between exaggeration, on the one hand, of the value of Sanskrit literature, and that, on the other hand, of the ethnological worth of conclusions drawn from Indo-European philology ; nor are we quite sure that we see it, even when pointed out by M. Oppert. Inferences from the material and structure of a language are not less independent of the literary rank of the works in which that language is preserved to us, than of their date. It appears, however, that, in our author's opinion, one sort of exaggeration has, by a natural contagion, founded in the perversity of human nature, led to another ; that the Indianists, inflamed with false fancies, and casting about to see how and where they could depart most widely and wildly from the soberness of truth, have imagined those crazy theories respecting an Indo-European race as speakers of Indo-European tongues, which, as we shall presently see, he looks upon as their chief offence.

But he is able to bring forward yet another reason to account for their aberrations. These are in part a new and striking illustration of the well-known principle that "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do." It is because the proper work of comparative philology is already pretty thoroughly done up, that the perplexed students of it, sighing for other worlds to conquer, have launched out into departments, and begun drawing conclusions, with which they had no business to meddle. Bopp's Comparative Grammar has not only the honor of being the brilliant initiator and model of a new science ; it has also exhausted the field of study. Hear M. Oppert : "The work of Bopp is so complete in itself, it has so exhausted all the resources of the branch of learning which it has contributed to create, that after it the science will make no further progress worth noting." (p. 55.) Again : "This feeling which impressed itself upon the disciples of M. Bopp, this conviction that grammatical investigation had arrived at its extreme lim-

it, urged them to extend unduly the frame which the prudent master had been careful not to transcend." (p. 56.) And more of the same sort, which we forbear to quote. Of all M. Oppert's erroneous assumptions respecting linguistic science, this is perhaps the one which will be received with most derisive incredulity by the workers in that science, the one which will render it most definitively impossible that he should ever again claim to be included in their number. We see here the "personal pupil," exalting beyond all measure, for his own private ends, the merit of his master's work, and refusing to believe that there can be any progress beyond the point at which he himself has dropped the study, to turn his attention to others. What is actually to be held concerning Mr. Bopp's achievements has been pointed out above, when noticing Professor Key's very opposite opinion of them. Not a single department, even of Indo-European philology, can be mentioned, in which there does not remain an infinite amount of labor to be done, in rectifying Bopp's errors, and in extending and perfecting his researches; and that not only in detail, but also in general features and grand outlines. It is not, for example, yet determined, to anything like general satisfaction, which of the great branches of the family are most nearly related to one another. One authority puts forward the Greek, another the German, another the Slavonic, as of closest kindred with the Indo-Persian or Aryan branch; one scholar of the highest rank asserts the Celtic to be the very nearest cousin of the Latin, nearer than even the Greek; while the more common opinion makes it a wholly independent division, and the first of all to separate from the common stock. And of the genesis of the primitive forms, common to the whole family, and of the special developments of vocabulary, uttered form, and meaning, which the several branches exhibit, hardly more than sufficient is known to whet the appetite for more complete knowledge; enough results yet remain to be wrought out to occupy generations of acute and devoted investigators. But, even supposing it all already accomplished by Bopp and his personal pupil Oppert, there are a host of other families whose languages are waiting for a like treatment; and only when they have received it, and when the results they yield have been combined with one another, filling out our view of each special

family, and of the totality of human speech, will linguistic scholars be at liberty to shelve their grammars and dictionaries, and take to fancy-work for lack of more legitimate occupation.

M. Oppert refers with strong disapprobation to the attempts which have been made to introduce some of the fruits of comparative philology into the systems of instruction of the young in Latin and Greek. With remarkable closeness of logical reasoning, he declares: "I can think of nothing more disastrous to science, in the point of view of pure science, *for* the desire would be to introduce notions which are often far enough from being incontestable, and, in the instruction of youth, innovation is to be avoided." (p. 57.) And he goes on to point out that the rising generation has a hard enough time of it already with its classical tasks; and that to crowd in modern philology would be a cruel addition to them. Finally, nothing would be gained by it; for "all the living forces of comparative philology would be impotent to render easier the understanding of authors, or to cast new light upon any point whatever of classical antiquity." (p. 58.) There would be more ground for this objection, if the only end of learning Latin and Greek were that one be able to make a glib translation of classical authors, and explain their archæological and geographical allusions. But, in implying this, M. Oppert takes as low a view of classical philology as he takes elsewhere of comparative philology. A Latin grammar, for example, certainly ought not to be a mere instrumentality by means of which the greatest number of empirical facts may be beaten into a boy in the shortest time; it should aim to be a true presentation of the structure of the language, with as much account of the reasons underlying the facts it teaches as shall interest and enlighten the learner, and make them more apprehensible and retainable by him. M. Oppert does not at all contemplate the possibility that the better comprehension of grammatical facts and their relations which comparative philology brings, may be made of service in recasting their systematic arrangement, and lightening the load of solid memorizing which the young scholar has necessarily to bear. The effort which he seeks to discourage is mainly made in this direction. As for the

general truths of linguistic science, they are doubtless in the main beyond the reach of the boy at school,—as, indeed, some minds are impenetrable to them even at a later stage of education: there are those into whom we may fairly wish it had been possible to flog them in the earlier and more impressible period of life; who might, in that case, exhibit a better present understanding of their character and bearing. But it is not true that the new scientific philology does not aid the comprehension of authors and of antiquities in the classic tongues. It performs the same office in them as in the more recent languages; and M. Oppert might just as properly sneer at those French and German scholars who encourage a profound historic study of their native languages as a means of keener and more exact appreciation of the beauties of their literatures, and of the thought and culture and institutions there represented.

It is impossible, however, to do justice to the incoherence and aimlessness of our author's reasonings in this part of his essay, without quoting and commenting them at greater length than we can afford.

What M. Oppert most strenuously demands of comparative philology is, as already mentioned, that it should not venture to draw any ethnological conclusions from its grammatical and lexical data. He extols Bopp (p. 55) for his "absolute grammaticalism," in that he talks always of dialects and their relations, never once referring to peoples and their connections and mutual influences. Now it is, indeed, to the credit of the author of a "comparative grammar," that he keeps himself in that work strictly within the limits of his subject; but whether we should not have a higher opinion of the *savant*, and put a fuller faith in the results of his researches, if he showed more often that he appreciated their ultimate foundation and wider bearings, may well be made a question.

If our author will not allow the etymologists to ethnologize, so neither will he admit that peculiar mental and moral characteristics constitute an evidence of ethnic unity. That traces of an "Aryan spirit" are to be discovered among the races of Europe he denies, as also that monotheism or any other *ism* is the peculiar appanage of the Semitic mind. We

find no signs, moreover, of his putting any higher confidence in physical characteristics ; at least, he only once refers to them, and then (p. 54) for the purpose of denying that there is any physical difference between “Aryans” and Semites, and that they can have been subjected to different climatic or territorial influences.

All this being so, we might fairly expect to find him a general sceptic with regard to ethnological connections, holding that nothing is or can be definitely learned respecting the migrations, the superpositions, the ejections, the mixtures of races which have laid the foundation of the grand communities now known to us. To our surprise, however, we find the truth to be quite the contrary of this. The most confident linguistic ethnologist, the most positive physicist, and the most daring ethnic moralist, if rolled into one, could hardly claim to know so much and so certainly of the history of races as does Professor Jules Oppert. That whole demolition of unfounded conclusions of which we have been witnesses was meant simply to clear the ground for the erection of his own magnificent edifice of absolute truth, — truth, as we must suppose, elaborated out of the depths of his own consciousness, or revealed through some spirit medium ; for, on the one hand, he seems to have left himself no other sources than these to draw from ; and, on the other hand, the doctrines he brings forward bear every internal mark of such an origin. Let us look at some of them, as set forth by himself.

His grand fundamental statement, which is to crowd out and replace the vulgar doctrine that the nations of Europe, speaking languages once demonstrably the same, are probably relations by blood to one another, is this : “There has detached itself from the populations inhabiting the heights of the Hindu-Kuh a stock of peoples which has directed itself toward the West, and has imposed its idiom and the character of its language upon the tribes which, later, mingling themselves with the primitive peoples of European countries, have formed the Greek, Roman, Germanic, Celtic, and Slavic nationalities.” (p. 53.) Anything more definite than this, it will be seen, no reasonable man could ask for. We are pointed to the precise mountain summits where was formed the original

Indo-European tongue, in the mouths of a people possessed of a propagative force unknown elsewhere in the world ; which people afterward, coming down, we may suppose, on sleds or with the avalanches, first taught certain tribes, not further identified, to speak, which tribes then, by further intermixture, made up the European nations. As M. Oppert gives us neither here nor elsewhere any account of the data whence he derives his wonderful conclusions, we can only conjecture why he should insert but two intermediate steps between his pure Aryans and their mixed modern representatives, rather than half a dozen, or twenty, or a hundred. They remind us not a little of the demiurges whom the Indian cosmogony reverently interposes between the awful Supreme Being and his humble human offspring ; or of the animals which the cosmology of the same Indians sets, one after another, beneath the earth, before arriving finally at the elephants, which need no further supporters, because their legs “ reach all the way down.” We seem to recognize in them, therefore, the influence of the character of Sanskrit Professor, in which M. Oppert addresses us :—and with pleasure ; for we can find no traces of that character anywhere in his essay, if not here. Yet it cannot be wholly out of veneration for the “ Aryans ” that they are set up at such a far-off height, barometrical and other, above us dwellers upon the surface ; for our author exclaims later (p. 56), with unmistakable heartiness : “ One has proclaimed that the Greeks were Aryans, which, luckily for them, they are not.” Wherein has consisted this superior good luck of the Greeks we are fully informed in another place (p. 62) : “ This people of the Greeks itself has been formed out of divers Asiatic elements, ingrafted upon a foundation of primitive population not yet recognized ; it has had to endure the invasion of the Aryan race, which has imposed upon it the Greek tongue ” ;—and he then goes on to point out that it has absorbed also a “ powerful parcel ” of Semitic blood and spirit. All this, again, without any statement of reasons. “ Thus saith M. Oppert ” is to be accepted by us as a sufficient ground of belief in anything whatever. Elsewhere (p. 58, *seq.*) he indicates in considerable detail how and in what proportions the Oriental element, the Ugrian, and the “ aboriginal

European, or Iberian," have mingled to form the commonly reputed branches of the Indo-European family ; he traces the difference of constitution among the different sections of the Letto-Slavic branch, as the Russians, Poles, and Lithuanians, giving the palm of purity as " Aryans " to the last. The Pelasgians and the Etruscans make a considerable figure in his combinations, as in those of all scholars who deliberately cut loose from tangible evidences, and prefer to carry on their calculations with factors of unknown value. He has (p. 63) nothing to say against the idea that the Etruscans are a Semitic race ; and, " moreover, does not hesitate to see in the Etruscans the relatives of the Pelasgians, were it only for linguistic reasons of a certain importance " : — the linguistic character which they possess in common being, in truth, simply the fact that nobody knows anything reliable about either of them.

We have here an intimation that, after all, our author would not wholly reject the aid of linguistic science in determining ethnological questions ; that he only demurs to its being appealed to by other persons than himself, or to sustain views which do not accord with his preconceived notions. Other evidences to the same effect peep out here and there. A list of Greek words is given us (p. 64), selected from an asserted " very great quantity " in that tongue which are of Semitic origin ; and we may infer (although it is not so stated) that our author's belief, already quoted, in the extensive infusion of Semitic blood into the Greek nation rests upon their evidence. Now there is, doubtless, in Greek, as in every other Indo-European tongue, no small number of words which are not to be traced back to roots recognized as Indo-European in other dialects of the family : but the assumption is by no means to be lightly made that they are not Indo-European ; and it must be an exceedingly wary, circumspect, and profoundly learned etymological science — one, in short, as much unlike M. Oppert's as possible — which shall be entitled to declare them evidence of the admixture of any particular foreign element. That the list given is to be satisfactorily proved Semitic we have no confidence whatever : it is not hard to find in a variety of quarters superficially plausible derivations for such stray words, if a sufficiently loose method be followed.

Again, the theory that the Lithuanians are peculiarly pure Indo-Europeans cannot, so far as we see, rest on other grounds than the peculiarly primitive aspect of the Lithuanian language, which, as every comparative philologist knows, has more antique features by far than any other now spoken dialect of the whole great family. So that M. Oppert, after all, makes inferences from grammatical facts, in a manner quite unworthy a personal pupil of the great master whom he extols to us as a grammarian pure and absolute. The only feature by which his method differs from that of a mere ordinary comparative philologist is his unquestioning assumption that nothing but a mixture of blood can make the language of one branch of a family change more rapidly than that of another ; and by this he may count on continuing to be distinguished from all the comparative philologists.

Yet again, we should be curious to know how he has found out that there was a primitive Iberian population of Europe, if not by deduction from the character of the language spoken by the Basques, the modern representatives of the old Iberian inhabitants of Spain. Even here, however, as in the case last cited, he shows that he is no mere comparative philologist. The latter would be likely to reason somewhat after this fashion : The Basque tongue is, so far as can at present be discovered, unconnected with any other upon the earth. The Iberians, then, cannot have been either an Indo-European or a Scythian (Altaic) people. And, considering their position, it is in a very high degree probable that the soil which they held at the dawn of history was occupied by them before the other great races which now possess Europe had entered it, or before these had extended themselves so widely. Geographical names which seem to be of Iberian extraction, too, indicate that they were once spread over a wider tract ; and it is impossible to say of how large a territory they may have been dispossessed by intruders from the eastward ; perhaps they are the scanty relics of a race which might, with reference to the latter, lay claim to the appellation of aboriginal European : these are points respecting which, in the absence of all decisive evidence, we can only form conjectures. Our author, however, being endowed with a direct intuition, such as is not vouchsafed to the world at large

in matters of this nature, is not limited to conjectures : to him the Iberians are, categorically, the aborigines of Europe, and an element which has powerfully influenced and altered the Celtic race in Gaul.

There are other and more important cases to be pointed out where M. Oppert takes up certain of the conjectures or contingent probabilities of linguistic science, and, in the mighty alembic of his interior consciousness, transforms them into indubitable facts. It is thus with regard to the summit of the Hindu-Kuh, as centre of dispersion of the Indo-European mother-tribe. The suggestion of such a thing has, we believe, only a linguistic ground, and that one, too, of no value whatever. We are called upon to assume, in the first place, that because the Aryan or Indo-Persian branch of Indo-European speech is less changed than any other from the inferable original tongue of the family, therefore those who speak it must have stayed in or close to the original family home. But the inference is a *non sequitur*, pure and simple. We might just as reasonably hold that the Icelanders are nearest to the original home of the Germanic tribes, or the Lithuanians to the place of dispersion of the Letto-Slavic races. Fixity of speech does not necessarily imply fixity of seat ; nor the contrary. Then, in the second place, we are required to believe that, since the Hindu-Kuh range lies between the Iranian and Indian territories, these two peoples must have been born on its tops, and rolled off its opposite sides into their later places of abode ; and this is, to say the least, as wild an assumption as the other. Beyond all question, the Sanskrit-speaking tribes made their way into India through the passes of the Hindu-Kuh, out of northeastern Iran ; but they may have come in company with the Iranians almost from the ends of the earth to the point where their roads parted. A kind of support has been sought for this theory in the geographical records of the first chapters of the Vendidad, one of the books of the Zend-Avesta, but altogether vainly ; anything more uncritical and futile is rarely attempted than the conversion of the scanty and confused notices of countries lying within the horizon of the author of that document into authentic traditions of the course of Aryan migrations. To find, now, this combination

of baseless hypotheses, not admitted even as hypotheses by any cautious linguist, set up as a truth unquestioned and unquestionable over the heads of the linguists, by one who is decrying their loose and arbitrary methods, is rather trying to the patience: we hope that such a use may at least have the good effect of discrediting still more widely and speedily the hypotheses themselves.

We will speak of only one other procedure of the same character, but one which is perhaps the most fundamentally important among them all. M. Oppert, as we have seen, puts forth the doctrine that the correspondence of Indo-European languages by no means shows a race connection, a common descent, of the nations speaking those languages, but is the result of propagation from a single centre through the heterogeneous masses of a widely extended population; that it represents an imposition of linguistic materials and usages by one tribe upon others: and he puts it forth as what no one who is less wrong-headed and untrustworthy than a comparative philologist would think of denying, or even of doubting, and as needing, therefore, no laborious demonstration. Accordingly, he is at the trouble to point out none of the grounds on which, in his own mind, the doctrine rests. Yet he does furnish, in an appended sentence which we did not translate above, an apparent hint at them. After laying down his thesis, and stating (p. 54) that the time of commencement of the propagative process is doubtful, but may be conjecturally set somewhere between the fortieth and the twentieth century before Christ, he adds: "The same phenomenon has since, with more force in a linguistic point of view, been twice brought about, first by the Romans, then by the Arabs." It is, as we are persuaded, doing no injustice to his argument to draw it out in full somewhat thus: The examples of the Latin and the Arabic show that the use of a language *may be* extended far beyond the limits of the race to which it originally belonged; that peoples of diverse lineage, over a reach of country ranging at least as far as from the mouths of the Danube to the Pillars of Hercules, *may* come to speak the dialect of a single petty district; therefore, he is a dolt who does not see that this *must* be the explanation of whatever likeness exists among the Indo-European languages, from

the western shores of Ireland to the mouths of the Ganges. That is to say, we have once more a linguistic possibility, which the philosopher's stone of M. Oppert's absolute knowledge has transmuted into a pure and shining certainty.

How arbitrary and unauthorized such a conversion is, needs not to be pointed out. We should be wasting time and labor if we set ourselves about making clear that, in order to prove the analogy a good one, and capable of explaining the spread of Indo-European language, it would be necessary for us to examine the circumstances which have rendered possible the extension of the Latin and Arabic, and to inquire whether the same were supposable as accompaniments of Indo-European migration or conquest; and that, even if they were found supposable, we should only have furnished an alternatively acceptable explanation of the facts we are seeking to account for: positive testimony from some other quarter would be required, in order to make us accept it instead of the other. We do not discover in M. Oppert's paper the slightest indication that he has ever looked at the subject in this light; and, so far as he is concerned, it would be enough to place it thus before him, and demand that he furnish us reasons and reasonings, instead of mere assumptions, before we either believe him or take the trouble to refute him. Yet, as the question is one of such consequence, and as the same analogy stands in many minds in the way of an acceptance of the ethnic coherency of the Indo-European nations, a brief discussion of it will not, perhaps, be out of place here.

The first point to be noticed is, that the Indo-European languages are really one,—one in their fundamental substance and essential structure. None of them is Indo-European in the same sense as the English is Romanic, as the literary Persian is Arabic, as the literary Turkish and Hindustani are Persian and Arabic,—namely, by the infusion of a store of words, ready made, into the vocabulary of a tongue to whose grammatical fabric they are strangers. It is, indeed, assumed by a few superficial and ill-informed scholars, rude sceptics as to all the results of comparative philology, that this is the case; but we have no idea that M. Oppert himself holds such an opinion. If Bopp and his school have accomplished any-

thing whatever, they have shown, beyond the reach of cavil, that the branches of Indo-European speech have sprung from a single stock; that they are not independent growths, upon which certain common elements have been ingrafted. They all count with the same numerals, call their individual speakers by the same pronouns, address parents and relatives by the same titles, decline their nouns upon the same system, compare their adjectives alike, conjugate their verbs alike, form their derivatives by the same suffixes. That any missionary tribe or tribes should, by dint of superior capacity, civilization, and warlike prowess, or by any other kind of superiority, have exercised an influence producing such results as these over so wide an area, is absolutely impossible. Nothing known to us in the history of language lends the slightest degree of support to a supposition like this; unless, indeed, we could assume that the peoples affected had, up to that time, been absolutely destitute of speech, and were obliged to learn to talk outright from their civilizers, — a thing which no sensible man has suggested, or is likely to suggest. The superiority of one race impresses itself upon the language of another race with which it is brought in contact, not by displacing that language, but by infusing into it a certain body of new expressions, varying in number and character according to the degree and kind of influence exerted. To displace a language outright, the community that has spoken it must be fairly incorporated into that whose speech it adopts. There is no other way. This was the process which Rome carried on upon a surprising scale, and which has made the history of the Latin language so unlike that of the tongues of other conquering races, as the Persians, the Mongols, the Germans, the Normans; or even of colonizing and civilizing races, like the Phœnicians and the Greeks. There was an intensity of assimilative force in the Roman organization, military and civil, for which the rest of the known history of the world affords no parallel, and hardly an explanation. We can point out the elements of the force exerted; but the degree and extent of their combined action exceed our expectation, and, as yet, our comprehension. The Romans fused together into one body, whose whole life was governed by pulsations from the central

imperial city, first, the discordant provinces of Italy, — then, one after another, the territories of Southern Europe in which we now find the Romanic tongues spoken. They carried everywhere a highly developed civilization, to which finally a new religion lent its aid, and which was strengthened by writing and a literature; and these, as the whole history of language shows, increase immensely the capacity of a dialect for extension and assimilation of other dialects among which it is intruded. Only the co-operation of all the forces we have mentioned, working for centuries at their highest rate of efficiency, enabled the Latin to crowd out the vernaculars of so many races. Its spread was not coextensive with the limits of Roman empire, yet less with the limits of Roman civilization and religion. It was confined to that part of the Empire which was longest and most thoroughly held in hand and trained, as it were, by Rome. Britain, though more than once overrun and fully conquered, though penetrated by military roads and sprinkled with colonies, though to no small extent civilized and Christianized, yet lay too far away, and was too soon relinquished, for the process of assimilation of speech to work itself completely out; and Britain retained its Celtic tongues. The countries of Asia and Africa were in a similar position, — protected, too, in part, by the possession of a high culture of their own. And no sooner did the aggressive force of the Empire become weakened, and the severity of its hold upon its possessions relaxed, than the extension of Latin speech, save by the migrations of Latin-speaking races, came to an end. Since then, the acceptance of Roman civilization and religion has no longer carried with it the adoption of the language of Rome, but only the reception and naturalization of a certain proportion of Latin words, according to the more general analogy of such cases. The exceptional conditions being removed, their abnormal effect has also ceased.

The spread of the Arabic presents a similar combination of exceptional conditions, but in a very inferior degree; and the whole phenomenon is much more easily explained by reference to them. Here, again, we have conquest and organized empire, a religion which carried with itself a whole compulsory system of institutions, and a literature of which the chief

work, the work of daily and hourly use by every true believer, the Koran, might never be translated; so that a Mohammedan nation in which the Arabic language was not taught was an impossibility. But the extension of the Arabic as a vernacular has not been wonderful, outside of the Arabic race. Compared with the immense area of the peninsula of Arabia itself, the neighboring territories into which that race overflowed, and in which, aided by the influences we have mentioned, it made its language the prevailing or exclusive one, are not excessively wide. They are merely Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, and Egypt, together with the line of coast-country bordering the north and northwest of Africa. Southern Spain was once a colony from this last region; but the boundaries of the language in Spain were determined by those of the Saracenic race, and with the expulsion of that race it went out also, leaving only scanty relics in the general tongue of the country. And if, in the other direction, abundant traces of Arabic speech are found all the way even to the heart of India, they only illustrate the ordinary case of infusion of foreign elements into a vocabulary; they offer nothing which is to be paralleled with the extension of Indo-European language.

From this exposition, brief as it is, may be seen, we think, with tolerable distinctness, what is involved in the assumption that the spread of the Latin and the Arabic furnishes a sufficient explanation of that of Indo-European speech. Organized empire, enforced unity of institutions, literary culture, are the influences that have made possible the former; let them be shown to have accompanied the latter, and we will allow that M. Oppert's thesis may, at least, be true. If, however, they are, as we believe them to be, excluded by the necessities of the case, — for who has ever found their traces, or will look to find them, among the wide-spread branches of this family, many of which are seen, at the dawn of history, in a state of utter wildness and absence of civilization? — then we must refuse to be satisfied with the parallel, and must continue to hold, as hitherto, that the boundaries of Indo-European language have been approximately determined by the spread and migrations of a race.

Of course, every sound and cautious linguistic scholar is

mindful that language is no absolute proof of descent, but only its probable indication, and that he is not to expect to discover, in modern tongues, clear and legible proofs of the mixture which the peoples that speak them have undergone. Such a thing as a pure and unmixed race, doubtless, is not to be met with in the whole joint continent of Europe and Asia, whose restless tribes have been jostling and displacing one another for ages past. And especially in the case of a great stock like the Indo-European, which has spread so widely from a single point over countries which were not before uninhabited, there must have been absorptions of strange peoples, as well as extrusions and exterminations; one fragment after another must have been worked into the mass of the advancing race; and, as the result of such gradual dilution, the ethnic character of some parts of the latter may, very probably, have been changed to a notable degree. These are the general probabilities of the case: how far we shall ever get beyond such an indefinite statement of them is, at present, very uncertain; perhaps they may always remain as elements of theoretic doubt in the inferences of the ethnologist, possessing a recognizable but indeterminate value; perhaps the combined efforts of physical and linguistic science and of archæology may, at some time, fix their actual worth. But a heavy responsibility rests upon him who, in the present condition of science, attempts to appreciate them, and puts forth a sharp-cut and dogmatic statement respecting what has been the pre-historic history of this and that nation. To M. Oppert's efforts in this direction we cannot ascribe any value whatever. Nor can we refrain from expressing our astonishment that a scholar of his rank should be willing to present to a class of pupils, and then to the world, such an ill-considered tirade, such a tissue of misrepresentations of linguistic science, combined with assumptions as compared with which the worst he charges against comparative philologists are of no account. Unless some explanation and palliation can be made out in his behalf, our confidence in him as a philologist and ethnologist, as an investigator of the memorials of ancient time, will be seriously undermined and shaken, if not altogether destroyed.

A kind of explanation of some of the vagaries of this paper

suggests itself to us with so much plausibility, that we cannot forbear giving it expression, even though doubtful how far we are justified in judging our author's motives. That his polemic is aimed with special directness against M. Renan and the latter's opinions is very evident, both from express references and from less open, but yet intelligible hints. He is particularly severe upon his colleague's denial to the Semitic race of a part of that importance in the history of humanity with which it is generally credited. M. Renan is an Indo-European, who, being a special student and teacher of Semitic philology, seems to abuse this position of vantage in order to decry the Semites, and extol unduly the race to which he himself belongs. It appears, then, as if M. Oppert, occupying a contrary position, — being, on the one hand, a Semite by birth, and, on the other, a professor of the chief of the Indo-European languages, — had thought it incumbent upon him to undertake to turn the tables, and give the *soi-disant* Indo-European race a thorough setting-down. We have no intention of assuming the defence of M. Renan's peculiar views; with many of them our own opinion is quite at variance. But we must say that we do not think M. Oppert the man to accomplish the task he has here taken upon himself. The positions of the two antagonists are not, after all, quite correlative. M. Renan is confessed, by foes as well as friends, to be a Semitic scholar of the highest rank, and a man of sincere enthusiasm and fervid genius, who clothes his thoughts in such beautiful forms that one cannot read them without a lively æsthetic pleasure, even when most disagreeing with them. M. Oppert has done nothing on the score of which he can lay claim to repute as a Sanskritist, nor is he known as a comparative philologist: these are subjects which lie outside his proper department. And if he cannot impose upon us by his authority, so neither can he attract us by his eloquence: his present essay is as heavy in style, as loose and vague in expression, as it is unsound in argument and arrogant in tone. We have seldom fallen in with the production of an author of his claims to attention, which has so thoroughly disappointed us, and moved us to opposition.